Overview

This module is designed to teach participants how to create positive relationships with families and identify supportive community resources.

Student Outcomes

Student Outcome	Washington State Core Competency	Corresponding WAC	
		Centers	**FHCC**
Outcome A The student will recognize that families are the primary educators of their children.	*IV-Families and Community Partnerships: Relationships with Families* 1b. Respects the family's role as primary educator.	WAC 170-295-2080 WAC 170-295-2030	170-296A-6775 170-296A-2375
Outcome B The student can explain the elements of positive relationships and communication with families.	*IV-Families and Community Partnerships: Relationships with Families* 1c. Establishes positive communication and relationships with families. 1a. Greets families and children warmly and by name.	WAC 170-295-2080 WAC 170-295-2030	170-296A-6775 170-296A-2375
Outcome C The student will identify community resources that support families.	*IV-Families and Community Partnerships: Use of Community resources* 1a. Recognizes the different resources available in the community. 1b.Values and uses community resources that support and assist families.	WAC 170-295-2080 WAC 170-295-1050	170-296A-2375

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Module 5: Family and Community Partnerships

📖 Required Reading

1. *Child Care Center Licensing Guidebook* (2nd ed., DEL 2006)
   Outcomes A, B and C: Section 3, pp. 89-107 ("What must I communicate to parents?")
   Accessed online at:
   http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/licensing/docs/ChildCareCenterLicensingGuide.pdf-
2. *Washington State Family Home Child Care Licensing Guide* (2nd ed., DEL, 2013)
   Section 3 pp. 3-5, "The Power of Interactions and Relationships," and Section 6 pp. 21-26, "Parent/Guardian Policies"

📇 Recommended resources for instructors

1. The Department of Early Learning (DEL**)** strives to support access to safe, healthy, and quality early childhood development throughout **Washington** State-
   http://www.del.wa.gov/
2. National Network for Child Care (NNCC) unites the expertise of many of the nation's leading universities through the outreach system of Cooperative Extension to share knowledge about children and families. Also have good handouts on communicating with families http://www.nncc.org/Families/com.parent.html and building positive relationships-
   http://www.nncc.org/families/cc53_build.pos.relat.html
3. Head Start is an office of the Administration for Children and Families and has an Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center with resources on family and community engagement- http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/For%20Parents
4. Washington State University Extension has parenting resources including tips for communicating with parents about development-
5. http://www.extension.org/pages/28228/tips-for-child-care-providers-to-communicate-with-parents-concerns-about-childrens-development
6. The Center for Children with Special Needs, Seattle Children's Hospital, seeks to improve and promote the health and well being of children with special health care needs and their families- http://cshcn.org/childcare-schools-community/talking-parents-childcare-professionals/talking-parents-communication
7. Provider-Parent Partnerships was created by Purdue Cooperative Extension Service at Purdue University to create a Web-based resource that would reach parents through childcare providers and thereby improve both parenting and childcare- http://www.extension.purdue.edu/providerparent/
8. ZERO TO THREE is a national, nonprofit organization that informs, trains, and supports professionals, policymakers, and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers. http://www.zerotothree.org
9. CONNECT: The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge has modules designed for instructors to use with child care providers and students,

http://community.fpg.unc.edu including Module 4 on Family-Professional partnerships-

10. http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/learners/module-4
11. ParentHelp123 a program of Within Reach is a website for families and individuals in Washington to find programs and comprehensive, up to date local resources, from parenting classes to food banks- http://www.parenthelp123.org/
12. Parent Education Core Curriculum Framework 2011: A Comprehensive Guide to Planning Curriculum for Parent Education Programs published by the University of Minnesota- http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ci/programs/fyc/docs/newDocs/Parent%20Curriculum%20Core.pdf
13. Help Me Grow Washington state program supports child growth and learning with free, ongoing developmental screening, without waitlists or income limits, and referrals for evaluation and early invention services. Family Health Hotline: 1-800-322-2588 http://www.parenthelp123.org/child-development/help-me-grow-washington

Videos supporting this Module

- CONNECTS modules, creating partnerships with families: http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/learners/module-4.

Introduction

All families should be recognized as their children's primary educators and support in the important and exhausting work of raising young children. Child caregivers are in positions to play an essential role providing this support. Child care has been called "the new extended family" (Galinsky & Hooks, 1977) since modern families often depend on their children's providers for help and advice on parenting.

The concept of *diversity* and the role of families were introduced in Module 1. To review, diversity includes differences in family make-up, culture, income, race, religion, abilities, resources, and school involvement. The word "families" will be used in place of "parents" to be more inclusive of the variety of primary caregivers, such as grandparents, step-parents, aunts or uncles, and others.

Community resources are services available to the public to help them meet their needs, become self-reliant, and increase well-being. Child care providers help by identifying and connecting families to appropriate community resources when needed. Supporting children means supporting families.

Nurturing child-care providers will try to strengthen family relationships by creating collaborative partnerships based on respect and trust. This module is intended to help

providers build positive relationships with families and work with community resources to best meet young children's needs.

Opening Activities

Option 1: Pair and Share

Materials Needed
- Chart paper or whiteboard

If you have students with experience in the field, ask them to turn to someone sitting near them and pair up in twos (or threes), introduce themselves, and share one of the most challenging parts of working with families, and one of the best parts.

In a small group, debrief by asking participants to introduce their partner(s) and share the challenge and best part they identified. In a larger class just ask for a few examples. Write your group's comments, and leave up to refer to later in the Module.

Option 2: Reflections on Families

Materials Needed
- Chart paper or whiteboard

If your students are new to the field, this activity will give them a chance to reflect on what they know about families and identify goals for themselves in recognizing and reinforcing families' roles as children's primary teachers.

Ask participants to take a moment to think about the following questions:

- If you were the parent of a young child, what three things would you want most from your child's provider?
- What are three fears you might have when leaving your child in someone's care?

Debrief by asking participants to share some examples of what they wrote down and why (and write them on the white- or black-board to refer back to later in Module).

Outcome A

The student will recognize that families are the primary educators of their children.

Discussion Questions

1. How are families primary educators of their children?

2. How can childcare providers support families in this role?
3. Why is supporting families so important?

👂 Presentation

Everything children learn depends on the context provided by their families, including their environment, interactions, activities, etc. The home is the center of children's development, and families are their first and most enduring teachers.

Most of this learning doesn't happen through direct teaching but simply by children observing his or her parents in daily life. There are four main types of learning in young children (LG Katz, 1994).

1. Learned feelings
2. Skills
3. Knowledge
4. Attitudes about learning

Pass around **Handout 1, "What Young Children Learn."**

(Figure 1, below, can be used in a projector to enlarge—see handout 1b.) The Ecological Systems Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) sees the child at the center of layers of concentric circles of environmental influences. In other words, the child is first a member of a family (microsystem), which is part of a community (mesosystem), within increasingly large environmental contexts (exosystem and macrosystem). Another way to view this model is to think of them as Russian dolls that nest inside each other from largest to smallest.
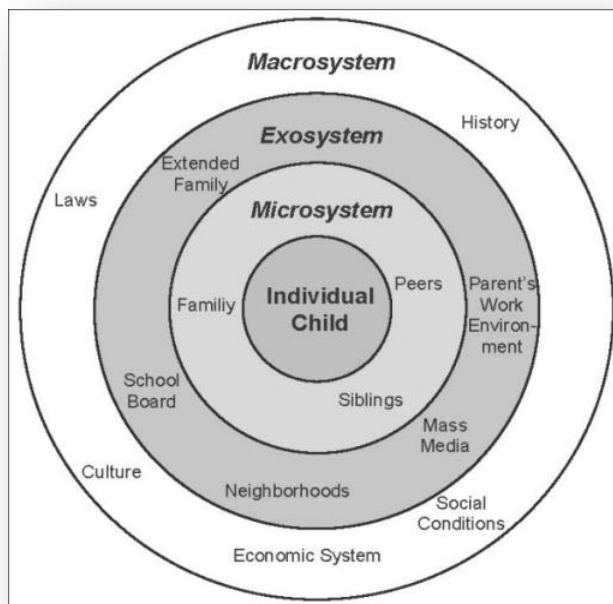

Figure 1

As you learned in Module 1, culture shapes our beliefs about what children and parents should be like, and how they should interact. Families then socialize their children according to their values. How children are viewed, touched, disciplined, taught, spoken to and more are all deeply influenced by families' systems of beliefs and behaviors. These may be different from the child caregiver's own values and beliefs but are not less valid.

Children's feelings about themselves also originate from their families' beliefs, which have lifelong impact on development and learning. While providers may know a lot about child development, families must be recognized as the experts on their individual child. High quality care for children can only be achieved when families are treated with respect and acknowledged as their child's most important teacher.

Interactive Learning Activities

Option 1: Family learning memories

- **Handout 1, "What Young Children Learn"**

Explain that this activity will help them understand how parents are the child's primary educators. Ask participants to relax and close their eyes while they think back to when they were very young (early childhood if possible), and ask them to recall a time they imitated a parent or family member. Ask:

1. Who and why do you think you imitated your family member?
2. What did you learn? Knowledge? Skills? Attitudes? Feelings?

Pass around **Handout 1** to help guide students in responding to the second question. Debrief by asking for a few examples of their answers, focusing on what they learned. Explain that young children are born to imitate and learn almost everything from their role models, those in their microsystem or families.

Option 2: Families as teachers photos

Materials Needed

- **Handouts 1 "What Young Children Learn" and 2 "Family Photos"**
- Additional pictures of families interacting with children

Explain that this activity (adapted from Head Start's *Supporting Family Learning*) will allow participants to focus on young children's learning at home. This can be done in pairs or trios. Tell the group that you will show different photos of young children interacting with adult family members in various situations.

Pass around **Handout 1** and ask participants to consider the types of learning listed

when they look at the photos: Skills, Attitudes, Feelings and Knowledge. Then give them **Handout 2** (or show on screen instead) and ask them to study the pictures and answer the following questions: What skills do you think the child is learning?

1. What knowledge are they learning about the world?
2. What feelings or attitudes might they be learning about themselves as people and learners?
3. What role does the family member play in their children's learning?

Debrief by asking for a few examples of answers for each question and picture. Note similarities and differences in responses and ask if there are other examples they would like to add. Make the point that most learning occurs in everyday situations when adults are able to follow up on children's interest and curiosity.

Outcome B

The student can explain the elements of positive relationships and communication with families.

Discussion Questions

1. What is a partnership and why is it important for providers and families?
2. Why do families and child care providers conflict with one another at times?
3. How can you take the lead in creating positive provider-family relationships?

Presentation

Partnerships
First pass out **Handout 5, "Ethics,"** to facilitate this presentation.
A *partnership* is when both parties have equally important and unique roles in children's lives. A true partnership is a supportive collaboration based on mutual interests. Both the care provider and the family member want the best for the child. What does that look like? Consider the following excerpt from the *Child Care Center Licensing Guidebook* (p.89):

> *"Best practice: Teachers and families work closely in partnership to ensure high quality care and learning experiences for children and parents feel supported and welcomed as observers and contributors to the program. Caregivers need to listen to parents, seek to understand their goals and preferences for their children and respect cultural and family differences. Parents should feel welcome when they enter the classroom. Parents should be encouraged to observe, eat lunch with their child, and/or volunteer in the classroom"*

On the handout, take a look at the excerpt from the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct section on responsibilities to families.

Obstacles to partnerships

Sometimes the sought-after partnership is not harmonious when families and care providers feel conflict with one another. When care providers are unable to connect with family members—who themselves may be struggling with guilt or worry about leaving their child in another's care—this can lead to "emotional power kegs." Common reasons for conflict include:

- Lack of time and few opportunities for communication
- Lack of understanding and appreciation of backgrounds, (culture, education, communication style, job status, income, class, race, religion, language, etc.)
- Differences in values and views of children
- Mismatch in modes of communication

Real partnerships between home and child care **are possible** when conflicts are recognized and resolved. Remember that YOU are the professional—the families of children in your care are the clients or customers. All parties want the best for the children involved. More about professionalism will be discussed in Module 10.

Building positive relationships with families

Empowering and supporting families is the best way to provide long lasting support for children. Recent research has found that:

> "…*healthy development depends on the quality and reliability of a young child's relationships with the important people in his or her life, both within and outside the family. Even the development of a child's brain architecture depends on the establishment of these relationships."* -National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2004). *Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships: Working Paper No. 1.* developingchild.harvard.edu

Just like the first step to creating relationships with children is to establish trust, the same is true with their families. Once trust is established, a positive relationship can deepen into one of shared decision making, paving the way for positive conflict resolution. It is expected that professionals will work with confidentiality, kindness, and respect. Other keys to successfully creating trusting partnerships include:

- *Welcoming families:* the tone of the relationship is set from the beginning so treating newly enrolled families with respect and encouragement is essential. Be sure to continue greeting families warmly every day.
- *Open communication:* create an environment of continuity, with consistent expectations and approaches for children at home and child care.
- *Positive communication:* really hearing families (active listening) and using "I statements" when speaking (more on communication will be in Module 8).
- *Involvement:* engage families in their children's care support and complement the family's role as the primary educator.
- *Building parental self-esteem:* find genuine means for communicating how important they are to their child.

- *Encouraging competence:* compliment their efforts, notice their child's successes, and treat them as knowledgeable partners Acknowledge emotions- provide the language and the confidence that all emotions are acceptable.

By building strong relationships with families you are more likely to provide what is best for the child you both care for.

Transitions – from home to program
Helping families and children with separation can be very challenging for all involved. Certainly when a child is new to your program you will want to be intentional about transitioning gently into the new environment and schedule. Consider the child's needs and how you might take action:

The Child Needs…	Caregiver's Actions
A plan for separation	Plan ahead for this separation work. Talk with the family member who brings the child to child care.
Their parent to say good-bye	Find a team member or another trusted adult to help out with the other children.
The caregiver to be close and attentive	Suggest the parent stay 3 to 10 minutes to listen and calmly assure their child that they will return.
Time to cry and be cared for	Relax, listen, and offer eye contact and connection.
To hear that "Mommy (Daddy, Grandma) is always coming back, and I (Caregiver) will take good care of you."	Watch for progress. For some children it will take time so welcome the opportunity to offer connection and time to cry over many days.
An emotionally secure caregiver	Make regular, frequent time to be listened to yourself. A trusted friend, supervisor, relative, or co-worker can listen while you reflect on what gets hard about separations, crying, and tantrums--what happened in your own childhood around similar issues? And you can listen in return, to give them an opportunity to explore their thoughts and feelings on any topic *they* choose.

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Interactive Learning Activities

Option 1: Partnerships four corners

Materials Needed

- Sheets of paper for labeling and posting around room

This active experience (adapted from Curtis & Carter, 1982) allows students to interact with one another, stretch their thinking, and move around. Make labels and post in each of the four corners of the room:

- o Ship, Hot air balloon, Bicycle; Wagon train-- one in each corner
- o Screwdriver; Hammer; Chain saw; Plunger-- one in each corner
- o Fish out of water; Moth; Ostrich; Beaver--one in each corner

Read each of the following statements to the whole group, and then ask participants to go to the corner that best describes their answer / how they feel.

1. "Working with families makes me feel most like a: (Ship / Hot air balloon / Bicycle / Wagon train)"

2. "When talking with families the tool I need most is a: (Screwdriver / Hammer / Chain saw / Plunger)"

3. "When it comes to handling conflicts with families, I'm a/an: (Fish out of water / Moth / Ostrich / Beaver)"

Explain that there are no right or wrong answers and they can interpret the choices as they wish. When they are in their corners, ask participants to discuss the reasons they made this choice. Point out that sometimes they were in agreement with some classmates on some topics but not on others, and how sometimes they were in the majority and sometimes the minority.

Option 2: Backwards brainstorm activity
More appropriate for students already working in early learning programs

Materials Needed

- Paper and pens, or white or blackboard

Explain to participants that this activity will help them identify approaches and attitudes that enhance partnerships by first focusing on what will harm or prevent positive interaction.

This can be done as a large group, small groups or pairs. Ask participants to imagine that their goal is to ***prevent*** families from creating partnerships with them. How would

they answer the following questions? Have them write down their answers or write their answers on a white board.

1. What could they do to undermine trust?
2. What will make families feel guiltier and more insecure?
3. What would you do to discourage parent communication, participation and involvement?

Debrief by going over the list, why or how it would prevent partnerships with families, and what is the *opposite* (and appropriate) approach or action? For example, if gossiping about the children and families discouraging trust, then confidentiality would encourage trust.

Option 3: Conflict resolution activity

Materials Needed

- **Handout 4, "Conflict Resolution Tips"**
- Whiteboard, poster board, or overhead projector

Explain to participants that this will teach the steps of conflict resolution that can be used with adults and children. Share the following on an overhead or board:

Stage 1 – Define the Problem. State it out loud to make sure each party agrees.
Stage 2 – Generate possible solutions. Don't judge-- just brainstorm.
Stage 3 – Evaluate the options and choose one that all can agree on.
Stage 4 -- Re-evaluate. You may need to use a Contingency Plan or to try another option.

Ask a volunteer to describe a pretend problem and apply the steps to conflict resolution as a group, or (if time allows) as a role-play in trios (One students acts as the family member, one acts as the provider, and one as an observer).

Debrief by passing out **Handout 4** and asking them to focus on the tips to guide them when conflict arises (discuss if time allows).

Note: Even when best practices are followed to create positive partnerships between child care providers and families, conflicts may still occur!

Option 4: Separation strategies

Materials and Resources Needed

- **Handout 3, "Helping Children and Families with Separation"**
- Whiteboard or paper for students

Explain that this activity will allow them to identify methods to help families and children

with separations. Ask participants to brainstorm ideas that make saying goodbye easier. Write these ideas on the board or paper

Then distribute **Handout 3** and ask them to compare their ideas (the lists the class made) to the ideas on the handout, and briefly discuss ways that caregivers could share this information with families.

Option 5: Five steps to family professional partnerships

Materials Needed
- Internet Access

Show participants the videos from the CONNECT Module 4: Family-Professional Partnerships at http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/learners/module-4. You may also choose to download the handouts for use with the videos. Explain that these videos will illustrate the five-step Learning Cycle model:

1. Dilemma
2. Question
3. Evidence
4. Decision
5. Evaluation

Debrief with the on-line Summary and Wrap-up Section and discussion.

Outcome C

The student can recognize and value different community resources that support families.

Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of community resources and referrals are typically needed by families with young children?
2. Why are community resources valuable to families?

Presentation

Types of resources
Part of supporting children and families is recognizing, valuing, identifying, and referring to community resources when needed. Families often don't know what resources are available in their community or how to access them. Barriers such as language, culture, education, etc. may make it difficult for some families to find and/or contact needed services.

Providers need to recognize when families or children need additional help, more than you can offer. Remember that your role is NOT that of a counselor or diagnosing doctor. Instead you must be able to recognize when a situation calls for professional intervention and/or assessment.

Identifying the broad-range of community resources and support available to families is necessary to providing appropriate referrals. Types of community resources typically needed by families of young children are:

- Housing, food, and social services
- Medical, dental, and mental health services
- Development screening and assessment
- Educational and recreation opportunities
- Services for children with special health needs including respite care
- Language assistance and resources in the primary language

Sharing resources with families
Specific ways you can help families include:

- Identifying Resources; Let families know the services available so they can choose the most appropriate resource for their unique situation. Be aware of cultural and language issues
- Linking Families to Services: Families may be overwhelmed by the array and/or requirements for accessing various resources. You may be able to help by making initial calls, providing a contact name and info, or simplifying directions.
- Connecting families to other families: Families sharing similar needs or dealing with similar issues may support each other; team up to seek other advocates, work together to create supports for unmet family needs.
- Easing transitions from your program to the next: Moving up to Kindergarten or another program is traumatic so work with the family to provide toward smooth hand-offs and continuity of care and education.

Resources benefiting care providers and teachers
Community resources can benefit you in your work as you plan curriculum and seek out resources for your classroom / program. Check out what is available to you through:

- The public library
- A children's museum
- Child Care Aware
- Public Health Department
- Your school district

Volunteers as resources
Another way to share the larger community with the children in our care is by inviting volunteers into your classroom or family home child care program. Remember the Brofenbrenner circles or the nesting dolls? Volunteers are one means for accessing the Exosystem. Think of all of the talent and interests family members, grandparents,

teenagers, or community members might share with children. Imagine the projects they might supervise, the fun stories they might read, the extra pair of hands they could offer at snack time, or the additional eyes and ears they could provide during outdoor playtime. Since volunteers are invited to be in contact with young children, protective policies and procedures need to be in place. Your guidebook sites the WACs and explanations of these laws, so make certain you know what to expect from volunteers.

<p align="center">"It takes a village to raise a child, seek out your fellow villagers!"</p>

Interactive Learning Activities

Option 1: Connecting families to community resources

Materials Needed
- Internet Access

Brainstorm techniques for connecting families with community resources. Start the ball rolling by providing access to a couple of community resources:

- ParentHelp123 (a program of Within Reach) is a website for families and individuals in Washington to find programs and comprehensive, up-to-date local resources, from parenting classes to food banks: http://www.parenthelp123.org/
- Help Me Grow Washington supports child growth and learning with free, ongoing developmental screening, without waitlists or income limits, and referrals for evaluation and early invention services. Family Health Hotline: 1-800-322-2588. http://www.parenthelp123.org/child-development/help-me-grow-washington

Identifying resources: On a whiteboard or in small groups list all of the community resources you can think of serving young children and their families in your community.

Connecting families to services: Which of the services listed may be difficult for families to access? Brainstorm ways you could help.

Building community services: Where are the gaps? Brainstorm ways families might join together to meet their needs.

Transitioning: On the white board list the many transition points young children experience. Brainstorm ways to smooth or ease the way.

Option 2: Working with volunteers

Materials Needed
- Copies of the *Center Licensing Guidebook* or *FHCC Licensing Guide*
- Optional: Internet access

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Explain that volunteers can be a wonderful way to both connect with the community and enhance your child care program. This activity will enable participants to learn licensing requirements for volunteers and how to develop a plan.

Ask participants to form pairs or small groups and then have them find these WACs (Washington State Licensing Requirements) in their Guidebooks / FHCC Guide under *Washington State Licensing Requirements:*

1. **RCW170-295-0070**-- What personal characteristics do my volunteers, staff and I need in order to provide care to children?
2. **RCW170-295-1050**--Who can be a volunteer in a child care center?

You may access the WACs online at: http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=170-295&full=true#170-295-1050

Follow-up questions:

1. What are some examples of what the law says about volunteers in child care?
2. Why do you think these requirements are in place?

Conclude by pointing out that almost half of the adult American population does volunteer work, or as Marian Wright Edelman (founder of the Children's Defense Fund) stated: "*Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time."*

Option 3: Volunteer quiz

- **Handout 6, "Volunteering in a Washington State Child Care Center"**

With this activity, students will have a chance to check their understanding of Washington State's regulations about volunteering in child care. Pass around **Handout 6** and ask students to check True or False for each question. Debrief by going over the correct answers as a group (see Answer Key for Handout 8 at end of this module).

 # Closing Activities

This module was designed to help you achieve the following core competency (from the Department of Early Learning's Core Competency for Child and Education Professionals)*:*

 "*to…develop strong relationships with families and work collaboratively with agencies and organizations to meet children's needs and to encourage the community's involvement with early care and education."*

Option 1: Ball toss circle

Materials Needed
- Small, soft ball

Ask the group to stand in a large circle and gently toss a small soft ball (like a Kush or Nerf) to a participant and ask her/him to:

- Name one new thing s/he learned today or thought was particularly important (explain that they can say pass if nothing comes to mind at the time).
- Next s/he tosses the ball underhand to another participant to answer the questions and so on until whole group has participated.

Option 2: Written goals

Materials Needed
- Index cards, pens

Pass out index cards to participants and ask them to:

- Write their name on one side.
- On the other side list one thing they want to do (or do differently), or an idea they will try as a result of today's module.

Take the cards home and look at them before the next module to see if they have done what they wrote or not. Or, the trainer could collect the cards and return to participants at start of next module

☑ Assessment of Learning

Have students take the quiz on **Handout 7, "Check for Understanding."**

WHAT YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN
(Adapted from Head Start's "Learning about Learning" handout)

Families teach their children most simply by the behavior they model since children learn best from observing and imitating.   There are four important areas of learning (LG Katz, 1994) parents impact the most, not by direct teaching but through everyday interaction:

Skills. Young children want to do the skills they see their caregivers and older siblings doing. While they can't have the skill mastery older family member have, they can develop skills in areas such as: self-help (for example, dressing), family life (setting the table), problem solving (starting to take turns), and literacy (storytelling). These skills are taught and reinforced in the home.

Knowledge. Young children gain their knowledge about the world through their experiences with people and things. For example, children learn very early to name objects and to understand their functions (for example, keys open doors). Children build on this background knowledge to learn new things and to acquire more knowledge. Families are important in expanding a child's understanding of the world.

Attitudes about learning. Children naturally want to do things they see their family members doing and enjoying (such as reading or taking on a new task.) The attitudes modeled by family, and their responses to children's efforts to learn, shape views towards learning. For example, the child who is scolded for scribbling on the wall learns that scribbling is bad. The same child who is redirected to a piece of paper learns that scribbling is good, but writing on walls is not.

Learned feelings. Closely associated with attitudes, these are the emotional associations children make with learning. For example, many young children pretend to read, mimicking the voice their parents or teachers use when reading and using pictures to tell the story. A child is more likely to develop feelings of confidence as a reader if adults comment positively. On the other hand, if the child is criticized or teased, s/he may associate feelings of inadequacy with attempts at trying new tasks.

Families set the stage for children's social and academic success by giving them basic skills, knowledge, attitudes, and feelings about themselves as learners. The quality of the home environment in the early years of a child's life has a powerful and long-lasting impact on how and what children should learn.

The Ecological Systems Model
(Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

This model sees the child at the center of layers of concentric circles of environmental influences. In other words, the child is first a member of a family (microsystem), which is part of a community (mesosystem), within increasing large environmental contexts (exosystem and macrosystem).
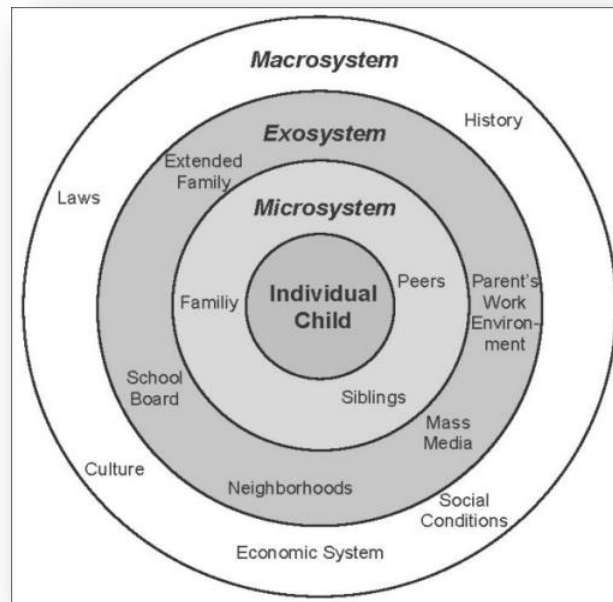
FAMILY PHOTOS

Please view photos and discuss the following questions:

1) What skills do you think the children are learning?

2) What knowledge are they learning about the world?

3) What feelings or attitudes might they be learning about themselves as people and learners?

4) What role do the family members play in their children's learning?

Photo 1

Photo 2

Photo 3

Photo 4

Helping Children and Families with Separation

One of the hardest parts of the day in child care is when families drop their children off. This daily separation, whether new or routine, can be very upsetting for all. Child care providers can help ease this transition by providing tips for families.

Why do some children cry when dropped off? Why when picked up?
Many young children cry when entering, or leaving, childcare for many reasons. The first is that it is normal and natural for young children to resist separating from their families and is actually a sign of their attachment. Separation anxiety can be especially intense during certain developmental stages and during life changes. Most children also dislike all transitions or changes -- so children may protest at both drop-off and pick-up times. Reassure families that the reason children cry at pick up time is not to reject their families, but because they feel safe enough in their presence to express their big feelings.

Child-care providers can make it easier: Young children cry to release their frustrations and express their feelings. When providers offer children compassion and comfort when they are upset, it restores their self-confidence, builds their ability to regulate their own emotions, and buffers the many stresses that little people can face in our big world. Your attention and sympathy allows children to express themselves and connect with you emotionally so they will be able to be cooperative, flexible, and positive during the day.

Remember that separations are hard for adults too! Try to be as sensitive to the feelings of family members as you are to their children. Families often feel guilty or sad about leaving their young children and don't know how to say goodbye.

By partnering with the family and the child you can help with separation.

1. **It is important for the parent/family member to say good-bye.** Explain that when adults sneak out it undermines trust and will make separations even harder**!** Creating a goodbye ritual and then leaving afterwards works best for most children. For example, two kisses and a hug, or hand the child to the provider so s/he can wave to her family member out the window.

2. **As a caregiver, suggest that the parent stay** for the first 3 to 10 minutes of crying, if possible, to help with the listening work, and to establish the emotional safety of crying *with* the parent about separation. But encourage families to *not* drag out the goodbye once the child is ready – it's usually easiest for children when families exit after their goodbye ritual.

3. **There are several benefits to listening to the child**. After a good cry, the child feels more connected to the listener so s/he is inclined to have stronger executive function (Module 2) and be:

    a. Less aggressive and/or impulsive
    b. Less withdrawn
    c. More thoughtful in play
    d. Better able to build meaningful relationships, and
    e. More flexible and cooperative in general.

4. Separation is harder for some children than others. Children's temperaments and life experiences may make separation particularly hard for some. It may be a large issue about which they need to cry hard many times over. For these children, you can expect to see gradual, positive change as they work through their grief and fear.

5. Share other suggestions for families that may help with separation:

    a. A **"transition object."** Bring something that reminds the child of her/his family to child care. Ideas include a blanket, stuffed animal, family photo, or something that smells like home.

    b. Establish a **regular schedule** since predictable routines make children feel more secure. When a child comes to and from child care at the same times daily it makes the adjustment easier.

    c. **Prepare the child ahead of time** by visiting child-care with them before returning to work so s/he can meet his teacher and explore the environment with you present. Families can also practice separations through play or books.

    d. **Tell the child when you'll return in terms s/he understands** ("Mommy will pick you up after naptime," rather than 3 pm). Reassure her/him that Daddy (or Grandpa or Auntie May) *always* comes back! Be sure to call if late so the caregiver can reassure the child.

    e. **Explain that some children object to separations more** than others— and it does not mean that their child loves his family less if s/he doesn't want to leave for home, or falls apart when you arrive. For some children, transitions are particularly hard, and children feel safe expressing their strong feelings in the presence of their parents when they are strongly attached to them. (Note: if a child doesn't want to leave because s/he seems genuinely afraid of her parent, please see Module 6: Healthy Practices regarding signs of abuse.)

References: Brinamen, C. & Page, F. (Nov, 2012). Using Relationships to Heal Trauma: Reflective Practice Creates a Therapeutic Preschool. *Young Children,* 67(5), 40-48. Siegel, D. & Hartzell, M. (2003). *Parenting from the inside out: How a deeper self-understanding can help you raise children who thrive.* New York: Penguin/Putnam. *Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines.* (2012) p. 20, 32, 58. Department of Early Learning. Wipfler, P. (2006) *Building emotional understanding: A course for parents and child care professionals.* Hand in Hand Parenting. Wipfler, P. Separation Anxiety Recovery. http://www.handinhandparenting.org/news/44/64/Separation-Anxiety-Recovery

Conflict Resolution Tips

- If parents are angry, remain calm and maintain your composure (remember that you are the professional)!

- Listen to what the families have to say and let them finish before responding.

- Respect the families' concerns and strong underlying emotion—try to see the situation from the parent's point of view.

- Try to defuse the anger by accepting and acknowledging with active listening. You could say, "You're really very upset about…" or "I hear you saying…"

- Once families feel heard, you can respond being by being respectful, objective and compassionate.

- If families are verbally abusive, tell them you will set up a later meeting with them to talk about this issue when everyone is calmer.

- If you need to inform families of a concern about their child, start and end the conversation with something positive about the child ("the sandwich technique").

- Be careful not to blame the parent for the behavior and to reaffirm the families' role as their child's first and most important teacher.

- Express your concerns about the behavior constructively and ask families for their help to find solutions together.

- Schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss the child's progress.

- Refer the family to the appropriate community resource if needed.

NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment

Excerpts from Section II -Ethical Responsibilities to Families & Section IV-Ethical responsibilities to community, society (Revised April 2005, Reaffirmed and Updated May 2011)

Families are of primary importance in children's development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child's well-being, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child's development.

Ideal-2.9—To participate in building support networks for families by providing them with opportunities to interact with program staff, other families, community resources, and professional services.

Principle-2.15—We shall be familiar with and appropriately refer families to community resources and professional support services. After a referral has been made, we shall follow up to ensure that services have been appropriately provided.

Early childhood programs operate within the context of their immediate community made up of families and other institutions concerned with children's welfare. Our responsibilities to the community are to provide programs that meet the diverse needs of families, to cooperate with agencies and professions that share the responsibility for children, to assist families in gaining access to those agencies and allied professionals, and to assist in the development of community programs that are needed but not currently available.

Discussion Questions:
- How are family members encouraged to interact with professional services?
- When are referrals tough to make?
- What have you done to follow up on referrals you have made?
- Which agencies do families have a hard time accessing?
- How can you help?

Module 5: Family and Community Partnerships

Handout 6

Volunteering in a Washington State Child Care Center

According to Washington State law, child care center volunteers can:	True or False?
Be 15 years of age with supervision	
Must be 18 years old if not directly supervised	
Must be registered with STARS	
Cannot be counted in the staff-to-child ratio	
Must have a criminal history background check	
Could be required to have additional evaluations (such as for psychological, or substance abuse) if requested from DEL	
Do not have to have "the understanding, ability, physical health, emotional stability, good judgment and personality suited to meet the…needs of the children in care" if supervised by an adult who does	
Must complete STARS Basics	
Can only be counted in the staff-to-children ratio if over 18 years of age	
May be alone with children if 16 years or older	
Must be female if left alone with children	
Can change diapers or help with toileting	
Must be "able to furnish the child in care with a healthy, safe, nurturing, respectful, supportive and responsive environment."	

[Statutory Authority: Chapter 43.215 RCW, RCW 43.43.832, 2006 c 265 and 2007 c 387. 08-10-041, § 170-295-0070, filed 4/30/08, effective 5/31/08. 06-15-075, recodified as § 170-295-0070, filed 7/13/06, effective 7/13/06. Statutory Authority: Chapters 74.12 and 74.15 RCW. 04-09-093, § 388-295-0070, filed 4/20/04, effective 5/21/04; 03-14-110, § 388-295-0070, filed 6/30/03, effective 8/1/03.

☑ Check for Understanding (10 Points)

Choose the best answer to demonstrate your understanding of Module 5:

1. A "partnership" is possible only if both parties have the same role and opinions. T/F

2. The Ecological Systems Theory sees the child as the center of layers of concentric circles of environmental influence. T/F

3. What are some common obstacles to partnerships between families and providers?
   a. Lack of time and opportunities to communicate
   b. Differences in backgrounds
   c. Stressful and emotional nature of caring for children
   b. All of the above

4. Diversity refers only to visible differences such as race. T/F

5. The **first** step in creating a partnership with families is to:
   a. Build parental self-esteem
   b. Establish trust
   c. Encourage involvement
   d. None of the above

6. Which of the following will **not** encourage a positive relationship between families and providers?
   a. Providing expert advice
   b. Listening non-judgmentally
   c. Welcoming families warmly
   d. Acknowledging feelings expressed

7. Helping build parental confidence is one of the best things providers can do to help children. T/F

8. Families are called primary educators of their children simply because they were the first adult caregivers. T/F

9. The main types of learning that happen at home according to Katz are:
   a) Learned feelings, skills, knowledge, and attitudes about learning.
   b) Educations, tasks, attitudes, learning style.
   c) Learned feelings, emotions, knowledge, and skills.
   d) Skills, academic knowledge, emotions and attitudes about learning.

10. Working with kindergarten teachers to transition children from child care is one of the ways providers can use community resources to support children and families. T /F

11. What is one of the community services commonly needed by families of young children?
  a) Housing, food, and social services
  b) Legal and insurance services
  c) None of the above
  d) All of the above

12. It is best for families to leave quietly once their child is distracted by playing. T/F

13. Why do children cry when separated from their parents?
  a. They don't want to be away from them
  b. They don't like transitions or changes
  c. They are expressing and releasing strong feelings
  d. All of the above

14. Partnerships can be hard with families because they sometimes feel guilty about leaving their child and/or feel jealous of their child's relationship with the caregiver. T/F

15. The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct names which of the following as provider responsibilities to families in Ideals and Principles?
  a. Communication, cooperation, and collaboration
  b. Communication, involvement, and referrals
  c. Cooperation, communication, and conferencing
  d. Observing, screening and assessing development

16. What are common barriers families face that may make it difficult for some families to find and/or contact needed services?
  a. Language differences
  b. Cultural differences
  c. Educational background
  d. All of the above

17. Which is **not** a recommended response to an angry parent or family member?
  a. Use active listening
  b. Remain calm and professional
  c. Suggest that they talk after the parent calms down
  d. Let family finish speaking before responding

18. Child care has been called the "new extended family" since many families now often depend on their children's providers for help and advice on parenting. T/F

19. Confidentiality is an essential element of a trusting relationship between providers and families. T/F

20. According to the NAEYC Code of Ethics, all handouts or written materials must be offered in families' primary language. T/F

Volunteering in a Washington State Child Care Center
ANSWER Key

According to Washington State law, child care center volunteers can:	
Be 15 years of age with supervision	False
Must be 18 years old if not directly supervised	True
Must be registered with STARS	False
Cannot be counted in the staff-to-child ratio	False
Must have a criminal history background check	True
Could be required to have additional evaluations (such as for psychological, or substance abuse) if requested from DEL	False
Do not have to have "the understanding, ability, physical health, emotional stability, good judgment and personality suited to meet the needs of the children in care" if supervised by an adult who does	False
Must complete STARS Basics	False
Can only be counted in the staff: children ratio if over 18 years of age	False
May be alone with children if 16 years old or older	True
Must be female if left alone with children	False
Can change diapers or help with toileting	True
Must be "able to furnish the child in care with a healthy, safe, nurturing, respectful, supportive, and responsive environment."	True

Module 5: Family and Community Partnships

☑ Check for Understanding (Answer Key)

1. A "partnership" is possible only if both parties have the same role and opinions. **F**

2. The Ecological Systems Theory sees the child as the center of layers of concentric circles of environmental influence. **T**

3. What are some common obstacles to partnerships between families and providers?
    d. All of the above.

4. Diversity refers to only visible differences such as race. **F**

5. The **first** step in creating a partnership with families is to: **b**. Establish trust.

6. Which of the following will **not** encourage a positive relationship between families and providers? **a.** Providing expert advice.

7. Helping build parental confidence is one of the best things providers can do to help children.
    T

8. Families are called primary educators of their children simply because they were the first adult caregivers**. F**

9. The main types of learning that happen at home according to Katz are:
    a. Learned feelings, Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes about Learning.

10. Working with kindergarten teachers to transition children from child care is one of the ways providers can use community resources to support children and families. **T**

11. What is one of the community services commonly needed by families of young children?
    a. Housing, food, and social services

12. It is best for families to leave quietly once their child is distracted by playing. **F**

13. Why do children cry when separated from their parents? **d.** All of the above

14. Partnerships can be hard with families because they sometimes feel guilty about leaving their child and/or feel jealous of their child's relationship with the caregiver. **T**

15. The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct names what as provider responsibilities to families in Ideals and Principles? **a.** Communication, cooperation and collaboration.

16. What are common barriers families face that may make it difficult to find and/or contact needed services? **d**. All of the above.

17. Which is **not** a recommended response to an angry parent or family member?
    c. suggest that they talk after the parent calms down

18. Child care has been called the "new extended family" since many families now often depend on their children's providers for help and advice on parenting. **T**

19. Confidentiality is an essential element of a trusting relationship between providers and families. **T**

20. According to the NAEYC Code of Ethics, all handouts or written materials must be offered in families' primary language. **T**